

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 GEORGE 00070 061906Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03
 INR-07 NSAE-00 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02
 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 AGRE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 PA-01
 PRS-01 SSO-00 /053 W
 -----087173 061912Z /50 40

O R 061815Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5975
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE GEORGETOWN 0070

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, GY
SUBJECT: GUYANA AGRICULTURAL AND GENERAL WORKERS UNION CALLS OFF
 135 DAY SUGAR STRIKE

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE INDUSTRY-WIDE SUGAR STRIKE WHICH HAS
PLAGUED GUYANA FOR OVER FOUR MONTHS HAS BEEN CALLED OFF.
THE GOG REPORTEDLY MADE NO CONCESSIONS. WORKERS HAD BEEN
PRESSING OPPOSITION AND UNION LEADERS TO END THE STRIKE.
THE GOG HAS A POLITICAL VICTORY, BUT ALL INDICATIONS ARE
THAT THE OPPOSITION WILL NOW FOCUS A NEW ATTACK ON THE
TOUGH AND REGRESSIVE ECONOMIC MEASURES THAT THE GOG IS
IMPOSING TO DEAL WITH GUYANA'S ECONOMIC CRISIS. CHARGES
THAT THE GOG HAS MADE A PACT WITH IMPERIALISM ARE ALREADY
A PART OF THE OPPOSITION'S LEXICON. MEANWHILE, THE FULL
ECONOMIC EFFECT OF THE SUGAR STRIKE IS STILL TO BE FELT.
END SUMMARY.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 GEORGE 00070 061906Z

1. THE GUYANA AGRICULTURAL AND GENERAL WORKERS UNION
(GAWU) ANNOUNCED LATE ON JANUARY 5 THAT THE 135 DAY OLD
STRIKE IN THE SUGAR INDUSTRY HAD BEEN CALLED OFF. A
PRESS RELEASE BY THE UNION SAID THAT "THE CONTINUATION
OF THE STRIKE WOULD NOT BE IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE
WORKERS AND THE NATION." HOWEVER, THE UNION ADDED THAT
IT WAS DOING SO "UNDER PROTEST AND WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO

THE STAND TAKEN BY THE GUYANA TRADES UNION CONGRESS (TUC) AND GAWU ON THE ISSUE OF SCABS." THE STATEMENT URGED THE TUC TO MAINTAIN EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE CONTROVERSY OVER THOSE WORKERS RECRUITED DURING THE STRIKE IN ACCORDANCE WITH POSITIONS TAKEN DURING THE TUC'S ANNUAL CONFERENCES. THE TUC HAD HELD THAT WORKERS RECRUITED DURING A STRIKE SHOULD BE DISMISSED BEFORE THE WORK STOPPAGE CAN BE CALLED OFF. THE ISSUE OF RECRUITS OR "SCABS" HAS BEEN THE PRIME STUMBLING BLOCK IN THE NEGOTIATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN DRAGGING ON FOR OVER THREE MONTHS.

2. THE GAWU STATEMENT EQUATED THE GOG TO THE OLD COLONIAL PLANTOCRACY AND PORTRAYED THE SUGAR WORKERS AS HEROES OF THE ENTIRE WORKING CLASS IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST OPPRESSION. IT ASSERTED THAT THE GOG HAD ISOLATED ITSELF NATIONALLY, REGIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY BY ITS "ANTI-WORKER" ACTIONS. GAWU ACCUSED THE GOG OF BEING CONTROLLED BY A "PETTY-BOURGEOIS ELITE" WHICH "IS MAKING A DEAL WITH IMPERIALISM." THE "REACTIONARY ALLIANCE" WOULD PLACE NEW AND GREATER BURDENS ON THE BACKS OF THE WORKERS. IT CALLED FOR WORKING CLASS UNITY IN OPPOSING THE GOG.

3. GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE TUC, JOSEPH POLLYDORE, STATED THAT THE GAWU DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN WITHOUT ANY PRESSURE FROM THE TUC. A MEETING OF THE TUC EXECUTIVE WAS PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 7 AND POLLYDORE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 GEORGE 00070 061906Z

FELT THAT STATEMENTS DRAFTED FOR THIS MEETING WOULD STILL BE PERTINENT ALTHOUGH THE STRIKE HAD BEEN CALLED OFF.

4. HIGH GOG OFFICIAL HAS TOLD CHARGE' THAT GOG MADE NO CONCESSIONS, AND IT IN FACT HAD NOT RECENTLY HELD DISCUSSIONS WITH GAWU OR TUC ON STRIKE.

5. COMMENT: INDICATIONS ARE THAT GAWU CALLED OFF THE STRIKE WITHOUT RECEIVING ANY MAJOR CONCESSIONS FROM THE GUYANA SUGAR COMPANY (GUYSUCO) OR THE GOG. IF THIS IS THE CASE, GAWU HAS MADE A MAJOR CAPITULATION. IT HAD BEEN GENERALLY KNOWN THAT MANY OF THE STRIKING WORKERS HAD CONCLUDED THAT THE STRIKE WAS FUTILE AND THAT THEY WERE DEPRIVING THEMSELVES AND THEIR FAMILIES OF LIFE'S NECESSITIES BY CONTINUING IT. THE PPP IS AWARE THAT IT AND GAWU HAVE LOST POLITICAL PRESTIGE AS A RESULT OF THE FAILURE OF THE STRIKE TO FORCE ANY CONCESSIONS FROM THE GOG OR GUYSUCO. REPORTEDLY, BURNHAM MAY ENCOURAGE THE FORMATION OF ANOTHER UNION TO REPLACE GAWU.

6. EMBASSY'S INITIAL JUDGMENT IS THAT GAWU AND PPP HAVE DECIDED TO CUT THEIR POLITICAL LOSSES BY CALLING OFF THE

STRIKE NOW AND SHIFTING THE FOCUS OF THEIR OPPOSITION
TO GOG TO THE CRITICISM OF THE TOUGH AND PREDICTABLY
UNPOPULAR ECONOMIC MEASURES THAT THE GOG IS NOW
IMPLEMENTING. THE THEMES THAT THE PPP WILL USE IN ITS
ATTACK ARE EVIDENT IN THE GAWU STATEMENT AND IN OTHER
RECENT STATEMENTS BY PPP SPOKESMEN, I.E., THE GOG IS
IN AN ANTI-WORKING CLASS ALLIANCE WITH THE IMPERIALISTS.

7. THE FULL ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF THE SUGAR STRIKE IN
TERMS OF DIMINISHED FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS, MUCH
SMALLER EARNINGS FOR WORKERS, AND DAMAGE TO FUTURE
SUGAR CROPS DONE BY INEXPERIENCED VOLUNTEER (SCAB)
WORKERS HAVE NOT YET BEEN FELT.

BLACKEN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 04 GEORGE 00070 061906Z

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SUGAR, INDUSTRY, AGRICULTURAL WORKERS, GENERAL STRIKES, SUGAR WORKERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978GEORGE00070
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780010-1329
Format: TEL
From: GEORGETOWN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780193/aaaadadk.tel
Line Count: 136
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 869901e6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3819387
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GUYANA AGRICULTURAL AND GENERAL WORKERS UNION CALLS OFF 135 DAY SUGAR STRIKE BEGIN SUMMARY: THE INDUSTRY-WIDE SUGAR STRIKE WHIC
TAGS: ELAB, GY
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/869901e6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014